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ABSTRACT

Prosocial education consists of school experiences designed to promote prosocial behavior. This paper demonstrates that: (1) there is an absence of prosocial behaviors in educational goals; (2) educational tradition venerates rationality and objectivity associated with "masculine" thinking and denigrates emotionality and relatedness associated with "feminine" thinking; (3) prosocial behaviors are the foundation of social responsibility; and (4) there is a need for prosocial concerns in educational practice. An examination of stated educational objectives, the "hidden curriculum," textbooks, and moral education reveals the omission of prosocial objectives in education. Historically, education has emphasized modes of thinking that are linked with the "masculine" ideal. Resistance to incorporating modes of thinking associated with the "feminine" ideals of care, compassion, and connection still exists. These behaviors have applicability in the public domain. The nation needs citizens who can act unselfishly from a worldwide perspective and who are committed to others in caring communities. For effective prosocial action to occur, students must develop higher level thinking abilities. Schools should provide models of prosocial behavior and provide student opportunities for prosocial action to help develop the necessary emotions and skills. Prosociality expands the notion of what citizenship can be. (SM)

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PROSOCIAL EDUCATION AND THE "FEMININE" VOICE

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Prosocial Education and the "Feminine" Voice

In this paper we will address the educational goal of prosociality, one that is noticeable absent from current educational objectives and practice. Prosocial behaviors are defined as helping behaviors taken on the behalf of others without regard to external rewards (Mussen & Eisenberg-Berg, 1977). Prosocial education consists of school experiences designed to promote prosocial behaviors. The objectives of our paper are fourfold: (1) to demonstrate the absence of prosocial behaviors as a goal for education in general and specifically in moral education, (2) to suggest that part of the explanation for the above lies in an educational tradition that venerates rationality and objectivity associated with "masculine" thinking and denigrates emotionality and relatedness associated with "feminine" thinking, (3) to highlight the importance of prosocial behaviors as the foundation of social responsibility necessary for active citizenship and (4) to derive implications of prosocial concerns for educational practice.

Absence of Prosociality in Educational Objectives

The omission of prosocial objectives in education is evident from our examination of four types of evidence: stated educational objectives, the "hidden curriculum," textbooks, and moral education. First, despite over two decades of research on prosocial behaviors and numerous lengthy lists of educational goals cited by local, state, and national agencies, prosocial education is rarely mentioned (Oliner 1986). For example in the

widely read study A Place Called School by Goodlad (1984), no explicit mention of prosocial behaviors is found in the compilation of educational goals and objectives. Given the current effort in defining educational objectives and the emphasis on accountability for these objectives, it is unlikely that prosocial education will be given serious attention without explicitly stated objectives. Nonetheless, we might assume that prosocial education is implied by current educational objectives and that teachers incorporate prosocial education as part of the "hidden curriculum." However, this assumption is unlikely given the society's bent toward individualism and narcissicism (Lasch, 1978). Rather the school's "hidden curriculum" is more apt to promote individualism than prosociality by encouraging self-interest and competitiveness among students (Giroux & Penna, 1981).

A third area that reflects the omission of prosocial education is textbook content. My co-author (Oliner, 1979) conducted a analysis of social studies texts. She examined them for prosocial concepts and examples of prosocial behaviors from human activities such social welfare, philanthropy, economic aid, and governmental efforts. Her analysis indicated that the texts did not include concepts about prosociality as organizing themes and omitted the study of human behaviors that demonstrate caring, concern, and compassion. Although examples of related concepts such as "working" and "community" were included, they conveyed the notion of interdependence with actions motivated by expectations of reciprocity, enlightened recognition of mutual interest and needs, a form of self-interest, not primarily concern for others.

A fourth area where we might expect to find educational

objectives that emphasizes prosocial behaviors is moral education. However we do not find current theory of moral development depicting prosociality as relevant or appropriate (Kohlberg, 1976). For example Robert Heslep notes that altering "the behavior of students in a prosocial direction . . . is agreeable to modern Western democracy, although . . . not especially relevant to it"(1978, p.5). Many of the current approaches to moral education, including value clarification, value analysis, and moral reasoning, emphasize the importance of individuals learning a process to identify, analyze, and choose from a diversity of values. The notion that pre-determined behaviors, even prosocial ones, be advocated would not be consistent with most moral education approaches (Scott, in press). Thus we conclude that prosocial behaviors are not reflected in the schools stated objectives, "hidden curriculum," textbooks, or curricular emphases such as moral education. We next turn to a possible explanation for the absence of prosociality.

Dominance of the "Masculine" Voice in Education

Masculine and feminine are fundamental ways of organizing society; the lives of individuals, families, and institutions reflect schisms inherent in a gender-conscious society. Likewise our notions of education and morality reflect gender-conscious values. Historically education has emphasized modes of thinking that are linked with the masculine ideal: rational, analytic, and objective. In particular, morality is usually equated with justice that can be determined by rational, analytic, and

objective modes of thinking (Kant, 1781/1949; 1797/1964; Rawls, 1971; Kohlberg, 1976; 1981). Doing what's right consists of protecting the rights of individuals or groups and, when conflicts occur, making judgments based on principles of universal justice. This perspective is linked with masculinity because of cultural stereotypes that emphasize logical thinking, impartiality, and lack of emotion in males.

Recent analyses by feminist philosophers (Blum, 1980; Martin, 1986; Noddings, 1984) and psychologists (Chodorow, 1976; Gilligan, 1982) have challenged the dominance of this masculine view. They assert that rational morality is limited and insufficient, and sometimes damaging. Their alternate view of morality emphasizes relationships of connectedness and care. In this morality, compassion and altruistic emotions are precursors to responsible action for oneself and toward others. A morality of care is based on relationships and connection with others, not impersonal or abstract principles. Because females are more likely to be socialized to value interpersonal relationships, express sensitivity and be nurturing toward others, this moral perspective is linked with femininity (Scott, 1986).

Though these two views of morality are gender-related, they are not the sole domain of either males or females (Lyons, 1983; Walker, 1984). Nor are they mutually exclusive. Rather they can operate simultaneously within individuals with one type of morality emphasized in a particular situation and the other emphasized in another situation. The educational establishment's failure to acknowledge the equal importance of a morality of care

and prosocial goals may stem in part from its inability to hear the voices of women, its reluctance to credit prosociality as a rational rsponse to the human condition, and its failure to recognize the emotional bases inherent in rational approaches.

Prosocial Behaviors and Social Responsibility

Despite efforts of educators to increase equity in education, there remains considerable resistance to incorporating modes of thinking associated with the feminine ideal: care, compassion, connection. Obviously, these values do not have the tradition and status of those associated with the masculine ideal. There is also a reluctance to endorse these values because of their association with the private sphere of home and family which further devalues them in the judgment of some men and women. Those who would like to expand opportunities for women in the public sphere may see emphasis on these values as detrimental to the progress women have made in expanding their roles. While society increasingly accepts the notion that females can engage successfully in thinking modes and behaviors associated with male rationality and justice, thinking modes associated with female emotionality are suspect, especially for males. And since prosocial behaviors presuppose emotional sensitivity and a certain amount of illogic, e.g. not always acting in the best interest of the individual, considerable reshaping of societal ethics are required before the virtues of the feminine voice can be fully realized in both the private and public spheres.

What we would like to suggest is that prosocial behaviors

and values need not be restricted to the private sphere but have applicability in the public domain as well. Citizenship education which deals with the role of individuals in their community, state, and nation is typically based on a morality of justice emphasizing social contract, procedural justice, and fairness. Citizens strive to preserve democracy while maintaining their individual self-interests. This type of citizenship results in gesellschaft society where people are bound in relationships because of principles of reciprocity and exchange (Tonnies, 1957). Individuals in groups are replacable by others seeking the same goals; respect is based on recognition of mutual self-interests.

However this type of community has some of the same limitations as the masculine ideal of morality discussed previously. In a world faced with increasingly complex problems, increasingly global relationships, and increasingly complex solutions, we need all the "tools" we can find to address concerns locally, in the state, nation, and world. What is missing in the gesellschaft associations are the bonding elements that make persons committed members of a community. In another model of community, gemeinschaft, individuals are bound in relationships to each other by personal linkages where care, affection, and love are expressed. Participants in a gemeinschaft accept as an ideal, caring and concern for others even when it involves non-reciprocity--giving more at times than one receives. Here a morality of care care be fostered because there are emotional linkages and a sense personal responsibility for the welfare of others.

It is important to note that we are not advocating a dichotomous approach to prosocial education that that pits one type of community in contrast to another, or pits a morality of care against a morality of justice. Rather we are proposing the need for an integrated approach that gives sufficient attention to the neglected "feminine" voice. "Only a wholly integrated ethic of caring and rights, of concern and justice can guarantee a humane and worthwhile life" (Sichel, 1985, p. 159).

To date there is little empirical data on the existence of a morality of care and a paucity of theoretical formulation on how it would be applied in public policy sphere (Brabeck, 1983; Sichel, 1985). More evidence and analysis is needed. One recent study on the rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust suggests the influence of a morality of care. Samuel Oliner and Pearl Oliner (in press) examined multiple factors that may have influenced a very small percentage of individuals who took great personal risk on the behalf of others. They found that a significantly larger percentage of rescuers reported learning values of care, helpfulness, and compassion than non-rescuers. Other studies such as these are needed to examine links between citizen action and prosocial concerns.

It is our position that society can ill afford to ignore the potential inherent in a society that schools all its children for prosocial behaviors, including reason and emotion. As a nation, we need citizens who can act unselfishly from a world-wide perspective and who are committed to others in caring communities. Therefore we need to reassess our value hierarchy

and consider implications for education. If we are to restore symmetry in the curriculum and teach social responsibility effectively, prosocial education needs to be taken seriously. Prosocial education is relevant for all pupils, and especially for males. who are less likely than females to be empathetic and feel concern for others (Feshbach, 1982; Gibbs, Arnold & Burkhart, 1984).

If educators were to adopt new objectives that incorporate prosocial concerns, what would they be? First, we would need to help students develop prosocial intentions and values. Without motivation or an understanding of the value of helping behaviors, students are unlikely to express caring behaviors. Second students would need to develop a sense of competence in carrying out prosocial actions. Many skills including interpersonal ones are necessary in order for caring behaviors to be effective in responding to the needs of others. Third, students need to be able to engage in problem solving and use logical thinking in order to determine what problems exists, what alternatives are possible, and what might be the outcome of particular actions. And fourth, students will need practice in prosocial behaviors to enable them to act independently in prosocial ways. Therefore we propose that a prosocial curriculum develop competences in four areas: (1) prosocial intentions and values, (2) basic prosocial skills, (3) intellectual processes involved in prosocial decision-making, and (4) participation in prosocial behaviors (Oliner, 1986).

Implications for Educational Practice

Because of a substantial research base on the correlates of prosocial behavior, it is possible for us to make specific recommendations for educational practice. A project to implement and evaluate prosocial education in several California elementary schools is finding significant gains in prosocial behavior among participants (Soloman, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, Tuck, Solomon, Cooper & Ritchey, 1985). Unfortunately, because of the rarity of prosocial education programs and the lack of evaluation data, we are unable to substantiate fully claims for the effectiveness of prosocial education, particularly at the secondary level. Much of the available evidence derives from studies of youth primarily 12 years or younger and outside of school settings. While it beyond the scope of this paper to review the large number of experimental studies on prosocial behaviors in both naturalistic and labarotory setting as well as correlational studies, we will cite pertinant findings that are applicable to school settings. (For more comprehensive reviews, see Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler, & Chapman, 1983; Eisenberg, 1982; Staub, 1979; and Mussen & Eisenberg-Berg, 1977.) The following generalizations are derived from the research literature:

(a) Modeling of prosocial behavior by adults increases prosocial behavior in children, especially when adults are consistent and nurturing, verbalize their feelings of concern, tell what actions they took to improve the situation, express pleasure or relief at the outcome, and label their behavior as "helping" others.

(2) Though less powerful than adults, other modeling agents

such as peers and television influence prosocial behavior, especially those models with whom children strongly identify or who have high prestige.

(c) Empathy is a significant mediator of prosocial behavior. Both the cognitive component of empathy, i.e. the ability to recognize the feelings of others, and its affective component, i.e. vicarious arousal of emotions and response to another's situation, contribute to increased prosocial behavior.

(d) Adult use of reasoning instead of power assertion to settle disputes with children enhances prosocial behavior. For example children whose parents typically explain the reasons for their actions and the harmful effects of other actions are more likely to behave prosocially when away from parental supervision than children whose parents reoutinely use threats of physical punishment or withholding love to influence behavior.

(e) Children's prosocial responses are increased when adults set high demand for mature behavior and performance of responsibilities.

If prosocial education is provided at all, it is usually in the context of the need to socialize the young child. As children approach adolescence, a shift in their cognitive perspective about self vis-a-vis others and an increased capacity for higher level thinking may require different approaches for prosocial behavior. Educators often assume that the best way to motivate students is through appeals to their self-interest, i.e, do well in school to obtain good grades, a good job, be successful, or appeals to cooperation and reciprocity, i.e. by pooling resources we can make a better life for everyone. Yet

appeals to self-interest and reciprocity may not be as effective as appeals to self-transcendance, especially for youth at risk with low self esteem who already believe that they are incompetent or that they have little to offer in exchange with others. Rather, competence and self-esteem may increase for students who engage in helping acts without a promise of reward or reciprocity (Trickett & Moos, 1974). What follows are some suggestions of what a prosocial curriculum might contain for student at both elementary and secondary levels.

Prosocial Intentions and Values. The motivation to help others often comes from feelings of empathy for others and a explicitly held value of concern for their welfare. The cognitive and affective components of empathy that can be enhanced by instructional techniques include: (1) identifying another's emotional state (affect identification), (b) understanding another's situation from his or her point of view (perspective taking), and (3) experiencing oneself the emotions felt by another (emotional responsiveness) (Feshbach, 1979). The affective component of empathy can be enhanced through role play and simulation strategies. Literature, drama, history, and current affairs are content areas where feelings can be analyzed and empathy developed. Values about an ethic of care and social responsibility can be derived from two sources: (1) content-based curriculum that examines cultural values from an historical, cross-cultural, and modern-day perspective; and (2) an examination of students' own values (Oliner, 1979, 1983).

Prosocial Skills. While the desire to help others is a

precondition for most prosocial behaviors, it is not sufficient to insure that such behaviors will be undertaken or be effective. A number of mediating skills are necessary. For example basic reading, writing, and computation skills are needed to write a letter or read a map to help someone who is lost. Interpersonal skills are needed to be able to express sensitivity about another's problem and to deal effectively in group situations. A knowledge of facts and the ability to find out information is necessary to be effective in dealing with service agencies or other organizations. Students can acquire basic prosocial skills in a curriculum where skills are taught and applied toward a purpose of care and concern for others (See also Scott, 1986a).

Prosocial Decision-making. For effective prosocial action to occur, students must also have higher level thinking abilities to take the perspective of others, to reason about a situation, consider alternative solutions, and to predict the probable consequences of those alternatives in relation to relevant others, often accomplishing these tasks very quickly or with painstaking deliberation. An understanding of how sex role stereotypes may be influencing the choices of females and males can increase students' flexibility in attitudes and decision-making (Scott, 1984). Complex knowledge is also often necessary to determine effective solutions to worldwide problems such as hunger or nuclear war. Students can acquire prosocial decision-making abilities through a content-based curriculum that requires students to examine their sex role attitudes and apply higher level thinking processes to actual situations where human need is

evident.

Prosocial Action. Schools should provide models of prosocial behavior and student opportunities for prosocial action to develop the emotions and skills already described. Prosocial models include adults and others in the school or community as well as case studies from history or literature. Opportunities can be created in the classroom through delegation of classroom responsibilities and action projects that serve the needs of the school, community, or beyond. By encouraging group identity and group responsibility for others, a morality of care can be fostered among students who develop a bond among themselves and personal commitment. Opportunities for prosocial behaviors can be provided through school-sponsored community service programs (Newmann & Rutter, 1986).

We have a considerable task ahead to develop further and integrate into society through education new knowledge, values, and action which derive from the "feminine" experience. Prosociality expands our notion of what citizenship can be and is pertinant for males as well as females. When society is able to incorporate the neglected "feminine" voice into our definition of the good citizen and public policy, we well have a more human model of citizenship.

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